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United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004)

Note by the Secretary-General**

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the mid-term global evaluation of the progress made towards the achievement of the objectives of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004), submitted in accordance with Assembly resolution 54/161 of 17 December 1999.

* A/55/150 and Corr.1 and 2.

** In accordance with General Assembly resolution 54/248, sect. C, para. 1, this report is being submitted on 7 September 2000 so as to include as much updated information as possible.

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Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the mid-term global evaluation of the progress made towards the achievement of the objectives of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004)

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I. Introduction

A. Background information

1. In 2000, the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004) entered its sixth year. According to the international Plan of Action for the Decade, and pursuant to General Assembly resolution 54/161 of 17 December 1999, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has undertaken, in cooperation with all other principal actors, a mid-term global evaluation of the progress made in the first five years of the Decade towards the achievement of its objectives. The findings of that evaluation are presented in the present report. In accordance with paragraph 24 of the Plan of Action for the Decade (A/51/506/Add.1, appendix), the evaluation was to take into account all available information on what had been accomplished at the international, regional, national and local levels, identify remaining shortcomings and needs, and make recommendations for action during the five remaining years of the Decade.

B. Mid-term global evaluation process

2. In April 2000, the Office of the High Commissioner and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) launched a worldwide survey on human rights education by addressing two questionnaires[1] to, respectively, Heads of Government and other principal actors (see sect. II.B below). The purpose of the survey was to take stock of human rights education programmes, materials and organizations developed and active since the launching of the Decade, and to request the principal actors to highlight human rights education needs, accomplishments and obstacles, and recommendations for the remainder of the Decade. In June and July 2000, follow-up activities were undertaken in order to obtain as many replies as possible to the mailing. As at 31 July 2000, 218 replies had been received; the number of replies received by region and type of institution appears in the annex to the present report. The information received through the survey on programmes, materials and organizations will be made available, through the web site of the Office of the High Commissioner, in the human rights education database which is to be launched on 11 December 2000, on the occasion of Human Rights Day (which, in this millennium year, will be devoted to human rights education).

3. Given the limitations of the information collected through the above-mentioned process, the data collection and analysis benefited also from the following:

(a) **Online forum**. The Office of the High Commissioner organized and funded the setting up of an online forum within an email network of human rights educators and other interested individuals and institutions (a human rights education listserv, managed by Human Rights Education Associates), from 11 July to 5 August 2000, in order to encourage maximum participation in the process. The agenda for discussion during the online forum included the legislative and policy framework of the Decade, main achievements and obstacles in the first half of the Decade, needs in the field of human rights education and recommendations for activities in the second half of the Decade;[2]

(b) **Expert meeting**. From 7 to August 2000, the Office of the High Commissioner held an expert meeting at Geneva, which gathered some of the most active actors and experts on human rights education in order to: review the results of the global survey and of the online forum; enrich those results with the experts' experience and advice; consolidate the mid-term evaluation report; make recommendations for further action to be taken by all actors at all levels (national and local, regional, international) in the forthcoming years; and advise the Office on the strategies to adopt for the remainder of the Decade;

(c) **Information included in periodic reports prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner on the implementation of the Plan of Action**. Pre-existing information received from Governments and intergovernmental organizations, during the period from January 1995 to September 1999, in response to related notes verbales and letters signed by the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Director-General of UNESCO, was also taken into account.[3]

4. The information contained in the present report does not fully reflect the numerous activities for human rights education currently in progress throughout the world; gathering documentation on all such activities was clearly beyond the capacity of the present review. Many institutions involved in human rights education, for a variety of reasons, have not taken part in the

review, although every effort will be made to include the experience of such institutions in the human rights education database.

C. Structure of the report

5. Section II of the present report provides a brief summary of the international framework for the Decade, as established by the General Assembly; section III analyses national experience within the framework of the Decade, by region, and provides information on cross-regional trends; section IV contains an analysis of international experience during the Decade including that of organizations of the United Nations system, other international organizations, regional organizations and non-governmental organizations, and contains information on general trends; section V presents a set of recommendations addressed to the local and national, regional and international levels; and section VI contains the conclusions reached during the mid-term evaluation of the Decade.

II. International framework for the Decade

A. Proclamation of the Decade

6. The World Conference on Human Rights in 1993 discussed at length the importance of human rights education, considering that human rights education, training and public information were essential for the promotion and achievement of stable and harmonious relations among communities and for fostering mutual understanding, tolerance and peace.[4] Accordingly, the World Conference affirmed that States should develop specific programmes and strategies for ensuring the widest human rights education and the dissemination of public information, taking particular account of the human rights needs of women,[5] and urged the proclamation of a United Nations decade for human rights education in order to promote, encourage, and focus those educational activities.[6]

7. By its resolution 49/184 of 23 December 1994,[7] the General Assembly proclaimed the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, while recalling the provisions of international human rights instruments (e.g., art. 26(2) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights) which embody the obligations of States to undertake human rights education, training and public information programmes.

8. By the same resolution, the Assembly provided the basic assumption for all educational work undertaken within the framework of the Decade by affirming that human rights education should involve more than the provision of information and should constitute a comprehensive life-long process by which people at all levels in development and in all strata of society learn respect for the dignity of others and the means and methods of ensuring that respect in all societies. It also affirmed that human rights education contributed to a concept of development consistent with the dignity of women and men of all ages that takes into account the diverse segments of society such as children, indigenous peoples, minorities and disabled persons, and that each woman, man and child, to realize their full human potential, must be made aware of all their human rights — civil, cultural, economic, political and social.

B. Plan of Action for the Decade

9. In proclaiming the Decade, the General Assembly had before it the draft Plan of Action for the Decade, which was subsequently finalized one year later on the basis of the comments received by Governments, as requested by the Assembly.

10. The programme for the implementation of the Plan seeks to: (a) assess needs and formulate effective strategies for the furtherance of human rights education at the international, regional, national and local levels; (b) establish and strengthen programmes and capacities for human rights education at the international, regional, national and local levels; (c) develop in a coordinated way effective human rights education materials; (d) strengthen the role and capacity of the mass media in the furtherance of human rights education; and (e) disseminate globally the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

11. The Plan addresses as wide an audience as possible, through both formal and non-formal education, and encourages an approach which is designed to build permanent capacity, including through the training of trainers.

12. The principal actors in the implementation of the Plan are identified in the Plan itself:[8]

(a) **At the national level**: Governments, national human rights institutions, human rights research and training institutes, non-governmental organizations, grass-roots organizations, professional associations and interested individuals;

(b) **At the international level**: United Nations human rights treaty monitoring bodies, other human rights bodies and programmes, United Nations specialized agencies, units of the Secretariat and programmes involved in human rights educational activities, and other international organizations, including intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations active in the field of human rights.

C. Structure for coordination, implementation and monitoring

International level

13. A structure for coordination, implementation and monitoring of the activities for the Decade was set out by the General Assembly in resolution 49/184, in the Plan of Action for the Decade and in the relevant resolutions adopted each year by the Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights.

14. The High Commissioner for Human Rights is entrusted with the primary responsibility for the promotion and coordination of the Plan. She reports annually, through the Secretary-General, to the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights on the progress made at all levels. She was also mandated to undertake the present mid-term global evaluation and to prepare a final report at the conclusion of the Decade.

15. By reason of its long experience in education and through its networks of associated schools, clubs, human rights chairs and national commissions, UNESCO is called upon to play a central role in the design, implementation and evaluation of projects under the Plan of Action, in close cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner.

16. The Commission on Human Rights, in cooperation with Member States, human rights treaty monitoring bodies, other appropriate bodies and competent non-governmental organizations, is requested to support the efforts of the High Commissioner in coordinating the Plan of Action. Similar requests are addressed to the organizations of the United Nations system and to intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

17. International programmes and activities, including those of the United Nations and other organizations, donor Governments, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations, are called upon to support national and local efforts in advancing the objectives of the Decade.

National level

18. At the national level, the Plan of Action envisaged the designation of national focal points for human rights education, consisting of specially constituted committees or, alternatively, appropriate existing structures and organizations. Each focal point was charged with identifying national human rights education needs and developing a national plan of action for human rights education, coordinating activities with regional and international bodies, and reporting to the High Commissioner on needs, proposals and progress made towards the realization of the goals of the Decade.

19. In order to support such national efforts, guidelines for national plans of action for human rights education (A/52/469/Add.1 and Corr.1) were developed in 1997, in consultation with human rights education experts and practitioners. The guidelines propose a strategy for the development of a comprehensive (in terms of outreach), effective (in terms of educational strategies) and sustainable (over the long term) national plan of action for human rights education. The guidelines set out a number of general principles governing such a plan (e.g., the importance for the plan to promote the interdependence, indivisibility and universality of human rights; to recognize the importance of human rights education for democracy, sustainable development, the rule of law, the environment and peace; and to encourage analysis of chronic and emerging human rights problems, which would lead to solutions consistent with human rights standards). The guidelines also set out organizational and operational principles (e.g., pluralistic representation of society, transparency of operation, public accountability and democratic participation), and principles for educational activities (e.g., respect for and appreciation of diversity of opinions, and participatory teaching and learning).

20. The guidelines propose also several steps towards a national plan of action for human rights education, including the establishment of a national committee for human rights education (a broadly based coalition of representatives of appropriate governmental and non-governmental bodies), the conduct of a baseline study or needs assessment and the development, implementation and evaluation of the plan.

III. Reviewing the first five years: national experience

21. The information in the present section, although collected on a country-by-country basis, is presented by region because the review revealed that local and national human rights education initiatives and activities tend to address both national and regional concerns, issues, needs and priorities. Moreover, such local and national initiatives have gained in strength and effectiveness as a result of regional and subregional cooperation.

22. The information contained in the responses to the questionnaires, supplemented with data from other sources, provided a coherent basis for the formulation of the recommendations presented in section V below.

23. Owing to the limited number of responses to the questionnaires and the difficulties involved in verifying the information received, and being aware of the resulting incompleteness of the picture of the efforts, achievements and shortcomings in the various regions, the review does not name countries and national entities but focuses on a comparative and conceptual analysis of the information gathered.

A. Africa

24. Twenty-seven responses to the questionnaires were received from Africa. Of the 53 Governments to which the questionnaires were addressed, 7 responded. Other responses were received from 13 non-governmental organizations, 3 national human rights institutions and 4 human rights and university institutes.

1. National entities and plans of action

25. Some Governments either created new structures or assigned the task of initiating or supporting national programmes on human rights education to existing governmental agencies. Four national committees for the Decade were established while, in other countries, ministries of justice or ministries of human rights were given the responsibility of dealing with activities related to the Decade.

26. Some governmental respondents have considered the need for a national plan of action for the Decade; two plans have been finalized while others are still in preparation. The latter group comprises both individual national plans of action for human rights education and overall national plans of action for human rights with a human rights education component.

27. Most governmental respondents indicate the involvement of various types of institutions in the development of the national plans of action or national human rights programmes. These institutions include non-governmental organizations (local and international), United Nations institutions (such as the Office of the High Commissioner, UNESCO, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other international organizations (such as the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Commonwealth Secretariat).

28. Most non-governmental respondents are aware of the initiatives taken by Governments in regard to the Decade, including the creation of national committees. A few of them have lobbied Governments for the enactment of legislation supporting the creation of such committees or the development of national plans of action; some have presented related recommendations to Governments. Others participated in the activities undertaken in the context of the national plan of action. Most governmental respondents are, in turn, aware of the human rights education programmes of non-governmental organizations.

29. Among non-governmental respondents, those that either have human rights education programmes or are planning such programmes number more than those which do not have such programmes or plans.

2. Policy and legal framework

30. As legislative support for the teaching of human rights in formal education, Governments mostly cite the existence of provisions in the Constitution and in the basic law on education as legislative support. None mentions any specific legislation or policy for human rights education.

3. Implementation

31. As far as formal education is concerned, governmental respondents report that the curricula, from pre-school to secondary levels, incorporate the teaching of human rights. Human rights concepts and values are taught as part of existing subjects, such as civics, morals, history, social studies, sociology and philosophy, and there are no separate human rights subjects. The national Constitution, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the two International Covenants, the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights are frequently cited as providing content for human rights education in schools. Governmental respondents also mention the organization of extra-curricular activities (such as UNESCO clubs). In general, there are no textbook analyses and evaluation of human rights teaching in the formal education system, but some Governments state that there are plans to carry out such evaluation along with a review of the curriculum. Some human rights education materials are reported to be available for the schools.

32. At the tertiary level, few universities have courses on human rights; the existing courses are offered mainly in the faculty of law of some universities (especially those with human rights centres).

33. Few governmental respondents have human rights education programmes for professional groups. Of these groups, members of the police, members of the armed forces, prison officials, lawyers, prosecutors, judges, foreign service personnel and a few unidentified professionals have undergone some human rights training programmes; however, pre-service programmes for those professionals and for health officials, immigration officials and journalists are very rare. For other groups, such as teachers, workers, trade union officials, employers and social workers, there are very few pre-service or in-service programmes.

34. Even fewer Governments provide human rights education programmes for other groups in need; if they do exist, such programmes are aimed (with differences by country) at women, children, the elderly, disabled persons, refugees, the internally displaced and persons with human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS), and do not address other groups, such as community leaders, minorities, migrant workers, prisoners and persons in extreme poverty.

35. Non-governmental organizations with human rights education programmes have corresponding activities and materials. They mostly provide human rights education programmes for various groups in need, and also organize general public awareness programmes. A few of them are also involved in human rights education programmes for professional groups, such as teachers and police officials; one non-governmental organization organizes subregional human rights education programmes for women who are members of Parliament, cabinet ministers and governmental policy makers. Seminars, conferences, public gatherings (such as marches and street assemblies) and competitions for specific groups constitute the major types of activities.

36. Some non-governmental organizations are collaborating with governmental institutions through joint projects and networking activities. Many non-governmental organizations are linked to intergovernmental organizations and programmes, such as the United Nations (Office of the High Commissioner), UNESCO, UNICEF, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and UNDP; they are involved in country projects and participate in conferences or workshops organized by those intergovernmental organizations, a few of which provide training programmes through their regional offices. In one case, partnership with such agencies as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Danish Agency for Development Assistance (DANIDA), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and the British Council is also mentioned.

37. Many Governments and non-governmental organizations in the region expect intergovernmental organizations to provide financial and other support for their projects.

4. Obstacles and needs

38. Both Governments and non-governmental organizations are confronted with a number of obstacles in developing and implementing human rights education programmes.

39. Governments generally mention the need for human resources, such as documentation specialists, training experts and other appropriate personnel. Materials for activities for human rights education (teaching, learning and training materials), and information on how these materials can be obtained, are also needed. There is also mention of the need for learning methodologies appropriate to human rights education. Governments intending to develop a national plan of action for human rights education express the need for technical assistance in this regard. One Government stressed that human rights education for adults could be enhanced through partnership with trade unions.

40. Funding, and in particular a long-term funding system that would ensure the long-term impact of human rights education programmes, is cited as a need both by Governments and non-governmental organizations.

41. Non-governmental organizations express the need for more political will on the part of Governments to develop and implement national plans of action for human rights education, to undertake human rights education programmes and to enact laws supporting human rights education, in line with the goals of the Decade. They also see the need for improved partnership between Governments and non-governmental organizations in support of human rights education, and for Governments to support the use of the media to promote human rights. More active regional networking among non-governmental organizations is also needed (the Southern Africa Human Rights NGO Network is mentioned as an example).

42. A few non-governmental organizations stated that illiteracy, traditional cultures and values, political instability and, most important, poverty are obstacles to work in human rights education; one non-governmental organization stated that human rights education programmes would need to be linked to the basic needs of the final beneficiaries in order for them to be emancipating.

B. Americas

43. Forty-five responses to the questionnaires were received from the Americas. Of the 35 Governments to which the questionnaires were addressed, 7 responded but only 4 completed the questionnaires extensively, thus providing more in-depth information. Of the region's national human rights institutions, eight responded; nevertheless, it should be taken into account that four were based in the one country. One regional organization and one national commission for UNESCO responded. Non-governmental organizations provided the largest number of responses: 21 of a total of 44. Seven institutes and universities also responded.

1. National entities and plans of action

44. Very few Governments in the region have established national committees for human rights education. A number indicated that, in the forthcoming year, they would undertake the task of setting up a national committee, comprising various governmental ministries and the relevant organizations from civil society. Nevertheless, a considerable number of Governments did not indicate such an intention.

45. Of the few countries in which a national committee has been established, the ministries of education seem to be the most active actor, while other ministries, such as, for example, those for the interior or social services (which, for instance, might be responsible for the training of law enforcement officials and social workers) seem to regard the Decade as less pertinent to their functions.

46. In a number of countries in which a national committee has not been established, national human rights institutions have taken over the responsibility to coordinate and encourage the development of activities for human rights education at the national level. These institutions have often developed human rights training programmes for professional groups, including non-governmental organizations; in a small number of countries, national human rights institutions have worked in isolation and have not involved academic,

non-governmental entities and other actors from civil society.

47. Very few Governments in the region have developed national plans of action for human rights education or overall national human rights plans that include an education component. Nevertheless, various actors at the national level were implementing ad hoc or partially coordinated programmes. In the absence of proactive governmental plans, non-governmental organizations are developing a large number of local and national initiatives aimed at different target groups; in a number of countries, networks of national and local non-governmental organizations and academic institutions have been established with the objective of coordinating activities for human rights education throughout the national territory.

2. Policy and legal framework

48. A large majority of countries in the region have not devised polices pertinent to human rights education or passed laws calling for the introduction of human rights into the education of children, young people and adults. Two of the few countries that have done so, have recently undergone peace processes and have received extensive support from the United Nations, in both developing a new legal national framework which integrates human rights obligations and providing human rights education to various sectors of society.

49. In another case, the national efforts of a Government, in close collaboration with a non-governmental organization, have not only contributed to the development of policies for the introduction of human rights education across the school curricula and the development of training for the police, but have also contributed to strengthening the work of neighbouring countries by sharing the experience of developing new policies and their implementation.

3. Implementation

50. Many countries are undertaking reforms of the formal school curricula and have chosen this avenue to introduce human rights into the formal education system, including through the revision of school textbooks. Most have introduced human rights into the curricula of secondary education and, to a lesser extent, into primary and pre-school education. Most frequently, human rights learning has been integrated into all subjects, cutting across the curricula (and not limiting the teaching of human rights to one subject, such as civics or moral education).

51. The information available reveals that, compared to efforts aimed at children and young people, few efforts are aimed at institutionalizing human rights pre-service and in-service training for professionals, and adults in general. For example, only one country reported having developed a human rights training programme for the military, through the human rights office in the Ministry of Defence.

52. The range of activities implemented during the Decade is vast and has varied from the convening of conferences, seminars and public meetings and the holding of children's drawing competitions, cultural events and public marches, to the production of written or audio-visual materials in several local languages. Promotional materials (brochures, posters, stickers etc.) and publications have also been produced and disseminated.

53. The commemoration in 1998 of the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights seems to have served as a catalyst for a large number of activities. In a few countries, these activities have led to the establishment of a diverse number of programmes on the part of the Government; however, these have not necessarily been translated into longer-term planning.

54. Most activities for human rights education are organized by non-governmental organizations and academic institutions. These organizations often work with different target groups, depending on the aim of their organization; the elderly, indigenous peoples, women, refugees, children and Islamic associations were specifically mentioned.

4. Obstacles and needs

55. Lack of political will, limited resources, and a lack of knowledge and understanding of human rights issues were mentioned throughout the region as major impediments to setting up lasting programmes on human rights education and training. In some countries, political instability, corruption, endemic poverty and illiteracy made the task of introducing human rights education more difficult and, at the same time, more urgent and necessary.

56. The inability of governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations to establish partnerships

was perceived as a major obstacle. However, in those countries in which this obstacle is being tackled and alliances between civil society and government are being forged, there seems to be a greater number of dynamic and growing activities for human rights education taking place. More collaboration and wider exchanges of expertise and experience are required to make better use of the resources available and to multiply efforts; mixed forums to encourage Governments, academic institutions and non-governmental organizations to seek partnerships and to develop joint efforts are also needed.

57. Broad human rights awareness campaigns to create empathy and understanding of human rights issues are needed throughout the region, in particular through the mass media.

58. There is a demand for a larger pool of resource persons who are knowledgeable in human rights issues and who are able to train others. Consequently, there is an urgent need to implement ongoing and systematic training programmes. Research on human rights education and human rights issues should complement the implementation of such training activities.

59. Overall, the respondents expressed the need for more educational materials, in particular on the methodological aspects of human rights education, on curricula development and the practical implementation of human rights by key professional groups. Materials aimed at illiterate people and marginalized groups (young and adult) are also needed. Wider and more effective distribution strategies should be devised and implemented. More attention should be paid to education about economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development.

60. The organizational development of both governmental and non-governmental entities is also seen as needing further strengthening. Training in this field should be provided as a component of programmes aimed at creating stronger educational systems and at developing more transparent and participatory organizational practices.

61. Technical advice from the Office of the High Commissioner in developing national plans of action and the expertise to implement them was requested by most respondents (Governments, national institutions and non-governmental organizations); support from the Office was also sought for the establishment of national networks of human rights educators.

62. The need for financial resources was mentioned by almost every respondent from the region. Financial sustainability is the greatest challenge for Governments, academic institutions and non-governmental organizations.

63. Evaluation tools, including indicators to measure impact at the quantitative and qualitative levels, are needed; the professionalization of evaluation expertise is also an important contribution to better planning and reporting practices. The development of evaluation tools should be combined with training programmes in key sectors so as to spread the use of such tools as widely and rapidly as possible.

C. Asia and the Pacific

64. Twenty-four responses to the questionnaires were received from Asia and the Pacific. Of the 60 Governments to which the questionnaires were addressed, 4 responded. Nine national institutions, 23 non-governmental organizations, 12 human rights institutes and universities, 3 national commissions for UNESCO and one governmental institution constitute the remainder of the responses.

1. National entities and plans of action

65. A number of countries in Asia and the Pacific have taken steps to create legal and institutional support for the Decade. Four countries have established national committees for human rights education. Other countries have designated other institutions as lead agencies, such as ministries of justice, ministries of education and national human rights institutions. The existence of national committees or lead agencies was not necessarily linked to the elaboration of a national plan of action for human rights education. Only two countries are reported to have adopted such plans; one country with a national committee is still in the process of drafting a plan.

66. The existing and planned national committees have varying degrees of involvement of the non-governmental sector. The only Government that sent information on the composition of its national committee reports adequate non-governmental representation (6 of the total membership of 14) and gender representation (5 members are women). In another national committee, representatives of the

business sector and community organizations are reported to be members.

67. Several countries are still drafting national plans of action. Some mention the support given by intergovernmental organizations, such as the International Labour Organization (ILO), UNESCO and UNDP, in drafting national plans of action. One country has not only adopted a national plan of action but also 26 local government plans of action; local committees were set up in 32 provinces, and they promote related activities independent of those of the central government.

68. In most countries, non-governmental organizations are not involved in the development of national plans of action but take part in their implementation; some non-governmental representatives are members of the national committee. Governments that intend to have a national plan of action expressed support for the inclusion of non-governmental organizations and other institutions in the drafting process.

2. Policy and legal framework

69. Most Governments cite the provisions of the national Constitution and the general education laws as the legal bases for human rights education in schools. Specific laws on human rights education do not yet exist, but several countries are considering this option. One country has an existing executive order that requires the teaching of human rights at all levels of the education system. Another country has a national policy of teaching non-discrimination to students, which was adopted long before the Decade, as well as a recent policy for the implementation of the national plan of action. Still another country has recently adopted policies that support human rights education in schools, such as the prohibition of corporal punishment and of arrest of teachers without the consent of the school principal, and the inclusion of human rights education in the school curriculum.

3. Implementation

70. There are no adequate reports so far on the extent of implementation of the existing national plans of action or of any human rights education programme by Governments in the region. Two countries provided information on human rights education programmes for professional groups. The reports cite programmes for teachers, lawyers and judges among the professional groups, and for women among other groups in need.

71. As far as formal education is concerned, discussions on human rights are integrated into such existing subjects as social studies, geography, history, language, or subjects on life experience; the national Constitution, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants and the International Convention on the Rights of the Child are mentioned as providing content for human rights education in schools. A number of countries in the region are working on the inclusion of human rights education in the educational system. Review of the school curricula, textbooks, teaching materials and teacher training are being undertaken in this regard. Students also learn about human rights through extra-curricular activities, such as election exercises and essay, oratorial or slogan contests. The participation of schools in the Associated Schools Network Project of UNESCO and the Global Village Game of UNICEF is cited as an example of human rights education in schools. Some Governments report that evaluation of human rights education in schools (mainly at the primary and secondary levels) is done through the regular assessment systems including, in one case, the biannual meetings of teachers and parents.

72. At the tertiary level, there are several countries in which universities include human rights in their syllabuses.

73. National human rights institutions are acknowledged as playing a significant role in national activities for human rights education by producing human rights education materials, involving governmental officials in human rights education workshops, providing ideas on the development of national plans of action and developing human rights awareness-raising programmes for the general public. One national institution has a broad regional programme that includes human rights education. Collaboration between these national institutions and intergovernmental agencies is, however, not done on a regular basis.

74. Governmental agencies (in particular, ministries of education), non-governmental organizations and national institutions have established partnerships within human rights education projects in several countries.

75. Non-governmental organizations have been particularly active in promoting the Decade; regional conferences and workshops have emphasized the need to promote the Decade at the national level, in cooperation with various governmental and non-governmental institutions; non-governmental organizations are also disseminating publications promoting the Decade in the region. Some non-governmental organizations have developed training and mass media (radio and television) programmes. However, there are also many non-governmental organizations which do not carry out activities for human rights education.

4. Obstacles and needs

76. Governments, national human rights institutions, non-governmental organizations and other institutions express similar needs in relation to the implementation of human rights education programmes.

77. Information about existing national plans of action or model plans of action is needed, as is support from intergovernmental agencies in drafting such plans and the provision of corresponding financial support. There is also a need to disseminate research and field studies on human rights, undertake methodological studies to improve the quality of training of trainers and develop specific programmes to educate against racism.

78. The lack of financial support and equipment has also been stressed. Human rights education programmes for the staff of the institutions concerned and for the general public, as well as long-term human rights education programming for specific sectors, are needed. Within the formal education system, there is a need to support the teachers and changes to the school environment. Professional support for advice and networking among human rights educators is also considered necessary, as is a legal environment conducive to human rights education.

79. Awareness-raising of specific issues, such as the relationship between HIV/AIDS and human rights, and the social, economic and cultural context of the concept of equal opportunity, are also identified as issues requiring a specific focus.

80. Better networking between national (governmental and non-governmental) entities and intergovernmental organizations, as well as cooperation, consultation and participation in human rights advocacy efforts are needed. In the absence of a regional human rights mechanism, it was said that opportunities should be explored within the context of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the South Pacific Forum (SPF), and with the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

D. Europe

81. Europe was the region from which the most replies were received (65). Of the 43 Governments to which the questionnaires were addressed, 17 responded but only 11 filled out the entire questionnaire. Nine national institutions, 23 national non-governmental organizations and 13 institutes or universities also replied.

1. National entities and plans of action

82. Fewer than one third of the Governments which responded have national committees for human rights education. Where such committees exist, there is generally an attempt made to maintain gender balance and a mix of governmental, non-governmental and independent expert participation. In one case, a national human rights committee dealing with human rights education was established more than 10 years prior to the proclamation of the Decade. In another case, a national committee set up to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights went on thereafter to become one of the most successful in terms of advancing the goals and objectives of the Decade and its Plan of Action.

83. In most cases, the mandate of the national committees included the preparation of a plan of action for human rights education. Where the mandate was more specific and, in addition to human rights education in the formal schooling sector, included specific human rights education mandates relating to racism, foreigners, women and children, the committees were able to function more effectively. Their effectiveness is also closely related to a diversity of participation, as well as the number of ministries involved. In a few cases, non-governmental respondents portrayed a different and less flattering picture of the national committees and national plans

than did their governmental counterparts. In most cases, where committees were established, a ministry (more frequently, the Ministry of Education) took the initiative. In general, however, advocacy and lobbying by non-governmental organizations were crucial and, in some cases, determinative.

84. Overall, the experience of the region does indicate that various versions of a national focal point exist, and that their existence does have a positive bearing on human rights education. The formal model of national committee set out in the United Nations guidelines has, however, been replaced by other, more informal, entities.

85. In some countries in which there is no focal point for the Decade, work is in progress towards the establishment of a national committee and the elaboration of a national plan of action for human rights education. In one case, a network of human rights coordinators (one in each ministry), charged with pursuing human rights and human rights education questions within and among the ministries, was established, and cooperation with non-governmental organizations and other actors is sought on specific projects, depending on the target audience.

86. Very few national plans of action for human rights education already exist, as such or as part of an overall human rights plan.

2. Policy and legal framework

87. Few countries in the region have an encompassing legislative framework for human rights education. Some legislation does, however, exist in most countries, mainly directed at the primary and secondary school levels. It is least frequent for the pre-school level and mostly absent for the university level. Where legislation does not exist, a mandate for education and for human rights education can be found in administrative actions.

3. Implementation

88. Regarding formal education in schools and colleges, only one Government reports integrated human rights education at all levels: pre-school, primary and secondary. Most of the governmental responses indicate such integration at some levels, mostly primary and secondary. Moreover, the responses indicate that human rights education is rarely imparted during every year of primary and secondary schooling, but is targeted at specific age groups.

89. The Decade has raised awareness of the need for textbook revision, curriculum development and teacher training. This seems to be a work in progress in most countries; in one country, a service centre for human rights education in schools, responsible for systematically providing relevant advice to all school teachers, has been set up. In most countries, however, the work has yet to begin.

90. A large number of activities for human rights education are reported outside the context of formal education: general awareness-raising and public information campaigns, seminars, workshops, training (including, importantly, training of trainers), use of non-print media for communication, use of music, street theatre and the performing arts. The responses under the heading of opportunities indicate that many more windows of opportunity exist than are currently being utilized. They also indicate a low incidence of technical assistance and, while some collaboration with United Nations institutions is taking place, there is clearly room for much greater collaboration.

91. Issues of discrimination, racism, minorities, inter-generational and intra-generational equity, gender, youth and conflict resolution appear to be attracting the attention of both non-governmental organizations and Governments. There is also concern about pupils' rights and equity in the school system.

92. Human rights education aimed at professional groups is reported with regard to law enforcement, the administration of justice and prison officials, and less so with regard to officials working in ministries relating to the economy and social welfare.

4. Obstacles and needs

93. All of the obstacles identified in the other regions are also reported for Europe. They include the familiar list of lack of resources, political will, technology and time. One response lists as an obstacle, in formal education, the emphasis placed on gaining knowledge rather than on the development of the student's personality and attitude. Another respondent points more positively to a progression in human rights education: from learning to know, to learning to do, to learning to live together and to learning to be.

94. The needs identified include financial, human and technical resources, training materials, methodologies (especially relating to the evaluation of human rights education) and appropriate equipment. Another list of needs relates to enhanced coordination, cooperation and networking.

95. The responses also mentioned the importance of assessing the human rights education needs of specific sectors (e.g., minorities, workers, indigenous peoples) or in regard to specific issues and practices (e.g., racism, discrimination).

E. Cross-regional trends

96. An overall analysis of the information gathered in connection with the mid-term review reveals a number of trends in all regions. The trends raise significant issues that are likely to affect the effective implementation of human rights education programmes. The following are noted:

(a) Responsibility for human rights education is vested in a wide variety of national entities. The effectiveness of their activities varies greatly;

(b) Many activities for human rights education exist independently of national plans of action. There is a strong correlation between the degree of participation by various sectors of society in the development of a plan and its effective implementation;

(c) Many of the wide range of activities for human rights education reviewed appear to be one off efforts with little or no follow up (e.g., conferences and seminars without an overall strategy). This may put into question their long-term impact;

(d) The responses do not indicate a clear correlation between legislation which supports human rights education and the actual incidence of activities for human rights education. In their replies, respondents focused exclusively on laws relating to the establishment of a mandate and the obligation to provide human rights education; however, several other laws are of considerable importance. Laws may restrict education or justify discrimination in access to education. Laws restricting the media and laws restricting human rights educators or repressing human rights defenders are of crucial importance as well;

(e) Except for one country, no responses indicate treatment of human rights as a separate subject in schools. The only examples of human rights being treated as a separate subject at the university level were in the programmes of specialized human rights institutes;

(f) The Decade has raised awareness of the potential for human rights education through extra-curricular activities but examples so far involve activities confined mainly to the schools themselves. The scope for extra-curricular activities that reach out from the school to the community and family remains largely underutilized;

(g) The evaluation of activities for human rights education is still very rarely carried out. For instance, the evaluation of human rights education in schools takes place only as part of the regular evaluation process within the school or the Ministry of Education, and not as a separate issue;

(h) Human rights education in the pre-service and in-service training of professional groups, as reported, is very limited. In particular, governmental officials need to be aware of all legal reforms, especially those concerned with human rights. While some human rights training is reported with regard to law enforcement, the administration of justice and prison officials, it is less so with regard to officials working in ministries relating to the economy and social welfare, although they also need an adequate understanding and knowledge of human rights practices in order to integrate them into their daily professional activities.

IV. Reviewing the first five years: international experience

97. The present section provides an analysis of the responses to the questionnaires by intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations. It focuses on the contribution of the United Nations system, given the specific role attributed to it by the General Assembly which, in proclaiming the Decade, invited the specialized agencies and United Nations programmes to contribute, within their respective spheres of competence, to the implementation of the Plan of Action for the Decade (resolution 49/184, para. 10). The World Conference on Human Rights had previously urged all United Nations organs, bodies and the specialized agencies whose activities deal with

human rights to cooperate in order to strengthen, rationalize and streamline their activities.[9]

98. Only 16 intergovernmental organizations (all except one belonging to the United Nations system) of the 42 to which the questionnaire was addressed responded, hence the information provided has been supplemented with data gathered from other sources. In addition, responses were received by 40 non-governmental organizations which defined themselves as international.

A. United Nations system

1. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights[10]

99. In connection with the Decade, the Office of the High Commissioner was given a double role: an overall coordinating role and responsibility for directly implementing some of the activities outlined in the Plan of Action.

100. In its coordinating role, the Office has disseminated information on the Decade and on human rights education by answering related inquiries, on a daily basis, from all Decade actors. A specific page on the Decade has been developed for the web site of the Office and is periodically updated.[11] Annual reports to the General Assembly and to the Commission on Human Rights on the implementation of the Plan of Action are prepared on the basis of information provided by the principal Decade actors, at the request of the Office. The Office actively encourages, participates in and provides advice on the organization of international, regional and national activities for human rights education undertaken within the framework of the Decade.

101. In its implementing role, the Office has focused on the following main courses of action in order to contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the Decade:

(a) Establishment of ad hoc partnerships, within specific projects, with other entities of the United Nations system and with other actors;

(b) Strengthening of national capacities for human rights education, including through the organization of educational and training activities and the facilitation of information-sharing, within the context of the technical cooperation programme in the field of human rights;

(c) Provision of support to grass-roots initiatives, through the Assisting Communities Together (ACT) Project, aimed at financially assisting organizations and individuals which carry out human rights activities in local communities;

(d) Development of educational, information and training materials;

(e) Global dissemination of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. A database containing more than 300 language versions of the Declaration is available through the web site of the Office.[12] For this project, the Office has been mentioned in the *Guinness Book of World Records*, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights being the most translated document in the world.

2. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

102. As envisaged in the Plan of Action for the Decade, cooperation between UNESCO and the Office of the High Commissioner has increased during the first five years of the Decade. The Office and UNESCO have implemented three joint worldwide projects: broad dissemination of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in schools, in 1997; dissemination of the guidelines for national plans of action for human rights education, in 1998; and a global survey on human rights education materials, organizations and programmes, in 2000. Consultation on the respective activities of the two has also substantially increased.

103. Within this framework, UNESCO has been focusing its contribution to the Decade on three areas:

(a) Strengthening human rights education capacities at the national and regional levels, including the organization of four regional conferences on human rights education in Europe (Finland, 1997), Africa (Senegal, 1998), Asia and the Pacific (India, 1999) and in the Arab world (Morocco, 1999);

(b) Development of materials on human rights education. These include various manuals, studies, bibliographies and directories;[13]

(c) Commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human

Rights. Activities in this area included an awareness-raising campaign with the production of promotional material (posters, calendars, publications etc.) and the organization in 1998 of a panel on the theme "Human rights education: building a universal culture of human rights".

3. Other United Nations institutions: an overview[14]

104. A brief description of the contribution to the Decade by other organizations of the United Nations system follows.

United Nations programmes and units of the Secretariat

105. The Department of Public Information raises public awareness of basic human rights and key human rights issues by producing radio and television programmes and other materials (posters, brochures, booklets etc.) in the six official languages of the United Nations and in others, which are widely disseminated to the media and the public in general through the network of United Nations information centres and through the Internet. Training for journalists, press conferences, briefings and seminars to inform the media of the work of the United Nations in human rights are held on a regular basis. The Department of Political Affairs has substantively included human rights education in the activities of its peace-building offices in Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

106. UNICEF has incorporated the education of young people as an important component in its advocacy programme concerning the Convention on the Rights of the Child, through the development of an appropriate educational strategy, the conduct of workshops for trainers and the development of materials emphasizing the methodology and content of human rights education. A network of educators and others involved in human rights and child rights has been established to facilitate the exchange of experience and ideas. UNICEF is exploring the application of a child rights approach to the wider educational process.

107. Since the adoption of its policy on integrating human rights into sustainable human development in 1998, UNDP, working in close cooperation with the Office of the High Commissioner, has included human rights in its training at all levels, and has drawn the attention of its resident representatives to the objectives of the Decade. Regional and subregional workshops on human rights-based approaches to development have been organized for UNDP resident representatives and staff and for governmental representatives, and relevant materials have been developed. A joint global subprogramme, HURIST (on the strengthening of human rights) has been launched by UNDP together with the Office of the High Commissioner.

108. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has developed programmes on human rights education which focus in particular on refugee issues, both for its staff and for refugees. Pilot projects in the field of peace education and conflict resolution have been offered to children and adults in refugee and returnee communities, and related training modules have been prepared. The fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights prompted the development of a kit of basic educational materials to promote peace, conflict resolution and human rights in refugee schools. Annual refugee law seminars are held in Europe to promote refugee law clinics.

109. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has geared its activities towards the promotion of the right of human beings to a safe and healthy environment, which is intertwined with the right to life, health, adequate housing and food, and the right to safe and healthy working conditions. It promotes public participation in environmental decision-making as part of its regular programme.

110. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) focuses on the health, sexual and reproductive rights of women, and funds an international training programme on sexual and reproductive rights at the Faculty of Law of the University of Toronto. The United Nations Volunteers programme (UNV) is working to create innovative programming to assist in human rights promotion at the grass-roots level and in the area of administration of justice. The United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) is developing a programme, in consultation with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, on housing and land rights, and is planning campaigns on good urban governance and security of tenure. The secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) is promoting the right to development at the national and international levels.

The World Food Programme (WFP) has produced a brochure in various languages on the role of food in relation to the promotion and protection of human rights, both in development and in emergency situations.

111. The Centre for International Crime Prevention, together with the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), is raising public awareness of the rights of victims of crimes and persons belonging to minorities, the human rights of convicted persons, trafficking in human beings, and forced labour and sexual exploitation. The International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) is seeking to work with the Office of the High Commissioner in the preparation of a framework for mainstreaming the principle of the interdependence between all human rights and the principle of gender equality within the United Nations. The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) is planning to assist in the development of activities for human rights education at the national and local levels, through the national researchers and social activists which collaborate with UNRISD, and has published books on such issues as ethnic diversity and public policy, and ethnic conflict and development. The United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) has included modules on human rights in its regular training programmes for members of the permanent missions to the United Nations, and has also carried out a survey of general institutes and training programmes within the United Nations addressed to the personnel of Member States. The United Nations University (UNU) in 1999 organized a six-week pilot international human rights course which addressed economic and political issues, refugees and human rights, and international human rights in a post-cold war world, and will include human rights issues in the international courses to be organized in the future.

Specialized agencies

112. The International Labour Organization (ILO) assists in training and develops training materials related to labour rights and the international labour conventions, and provides ongoing training programmes at its International Training Centre at Turin, Italy. ILO has expanded its public information programme on the basic human rights conventions, in particular with respect to such groups as parliamentarians and members of labour tribunals, and the mass media. Its regular training activities are directed at workers' and employers' organizations, as well as students and teachers from various academic institutions. In 1998, ILO published *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and ILO Standards*,[15] a comparative analysis on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration.

113. The World Bank considers education to be one of its strategic priorities; it supports the goals of the Decade and will assist the efforts of member countries in the achievement of such goals and principles. It has recently published *Development and Human Rights: The Role of the World Bank*.[16]

114. Other specialized agencies have focused on rights related to their specific mandate. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has developed materials and is promoting the right to food, and the World Health Organization (WHO) has focused on the right to health, human rights in relation to HIV/AIDS and is developing a human rights strategy.

Regional commissions

115. The role of the regional commissions in regard to the Decade has varied greatly. The Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) expresses general support for the Decade, although it indicates that its programmes are not directly related to human rights education and that it does not carry out or plan to carry out any activity relating to human rights education. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), on the other hand, mentions that it is already working towards the achievement of the objectives of the Decade. It has collaborated with the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights in an interdisciplinary course on human rights, and envisages a joint research project on economic, social and cultural rights and their realization. It also supports the global dissemination of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) does not yet have programmes or materials on human rights education, however, it contributes to the sensitization of the African people on the correlation between human rights violations and conflicts on the continent through national and subregional forums. ECA has embarked on a project to assess the state of governance in Africa and is using, as indicators in this

project, the frequency of human rights violations and the actions to redress them.

4. Obstacles and needs

116. The lack of financial resources was indicated as a main obstacle to the implementation of activities for human rights education. It was suggested that a way to address this problem could be to develop better networking among the various partners, on the basis of complementary work. Another obstacle relates to the lack of understanding of human rights within organizations, which leads to the absence in them of substantive divisions that focus on human rights.

117. The need to disseminate, within the United Nations system, practical and simple information on the United Nations human rights machinery and to improve the working relationship with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights have been stressed, as has the importance of developing large-scale, comprehensive programmes on human rights education and of focusing United Nations work on the empowerment of national human rights organizations and bodies.

B. Other intergovernmental organizations

118. The activities for human rights education undertaken by the three organizations mentioned below are excerpted from annual reports of the Office of the High Commissioner on the Decade.

119. The International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) is promoting human rights in three areas: the development of an international code of police ethics; the promotion of human rights training in police academies; and the collection and dissemination of information on slavery and similar practices. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) underlined the fact that, within the framework of the Decade, all States should be reminded of their obligation, under international law, to teach and disseminate international humanitarian law among members of the armed forces and civilians. ICRC participates in this effort by producing pedagogical materials (such as cartoons, videos and books, adapted to different regions), promoting international training sessions for members of the armed forces, providing direct training to national trainers, and carrying out awareness campaigns in various countries, in particular through the media.

120. In the first year of the Decade, the Commonwealth Secretariat organized, in September 1995, the Commonwealth Oxford Conference on Human Rights Education, which adopted an agenda and framework for activities for human rights education throughout the Decade. As a follow-up, a regional workshop was held for the Pacific region in July 1996. In addition, the organization sponsored a three-year (1995-1997) study, entitled *Commonwealth Values in Education: Young People's Understanding of Human Rights*, which deals with human rights education at the secondary school level in 23 schools of four Commonwealth countries, and which led to a series of recommendations aimed at furthering human rights education, addressed to Commonwealth ministers with related responsibilities.

C. Regional organizations

121. Only one questionnaire was returned by a regional organization. A brief overview of regional activities for human rights education as mentioned in the annual reports of the Office of the High Commissioner on the Decade, follows.

Intergovernmental human rights mechanisms

122. As a specific contribution to the Decade, the Council of Europe published in June 1999 a preliminary survey of human rights education and training in the member States of the Council of Europe and States with special guest status, prepared in consultation with the Office of the High Commissioner. Within its ongoing programme, the Council of Europe has produced and distributed promotional materials (such as posters, postcards, T-shirts, calendars), specifically targeted materials (for youth, national non-governmental organizations, police and prison officials) and other resource materials (bibliographies and directories). The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights has held human rights seminars and is in the process of identifying priority subregions and countries in which to conduct such seminars in the future; lack of personnel and funding were highlighted as the main obstacles to its adopting a more proactive role within the Decade. The Organization of African Unity has adopted some resolutions concerning human rights education in Africa.

Other regional organizations

123. The European Union has highlighted its funding role vis-à-vis human rights education projects, with an emphasis on the establishment of information networks and research centres and the training of officials working in the administration of justice and in the armed forces, notably in Africa and Central America. In 1997, the European Union established the European Masters Degree in Human Rights and Democratization, in conjunction with 15 partner universities. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has been contributing to the achievement of the objectives of the Decade through its ongoing activities.

D. Non-governmental organizations

124. Most international non-governmental organizations which responded to the global survey are involved in organizing training seminars, workshops and courses, and in producing materials to create greater awareness of human rights issues or for use in programmes on human rights education. They largely concentrate on the human rights issues that relate to their own mandate, and carry out generic work on human rights awareness to increase support for their particular concerns. Only a couple of respondents are solely dedicated to human rights education and only one other has a substantial programme on human rights education, which is carried out by its national branches.

125. Very few international non-governmental organizations seem to be aware of governmental efforts related to the Decade and were engaging with the authorities in the development of programmes on human rights training. Most of them organize joint conferences, seminars and other public events on issues relevant to their mandate, together with or with the support of intergovernmental organizations. There seems to be extensive exchange of information and collaboration between international non-governmental organizations and local non-governmental organizations.

126. The major obstacles identified by international non-governmental organizations is the lack of public awareness of and interest in human rights issues, and the difficulties encountered by, and dangers to the physical integrity of, their staff and supporters in some countries. The lack of human resources and political will on the part of Governments to support greater and wider knowledge of human rights are also seen as impediments to their efforts and as factors that need to be addressed.

127. International non-governmental organizations in general also identify the need for more training programmes for all sectors of society, and for the production of pedagogical materials, curriculum development and other materials on human rights education, for all ages.

E. Trends

128. An overall analysis of the information received from international organizations reveals a number of trends:

(a) The occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights witnessed several United Nations organizations undertaking specific activities for human rights education. The anniversary appears to have had a greater catalytic impact on the United Nations system than has the Decade;

(b) Although several international and regional intergovernmental organizations are undertaking activities for human rights education, there remains inadequate coordination among the relevant focal points, where they exist;

(c) Since the proclamation of the Decade, several intergovernmental organizations, notably some within the United Nations system, have affirmed their support for the Decade. There remains, however, a large gap between the resources allocated to activities for human rights education by such institutions and their affirmation of support. The additional resources that would enable them to develop programmes within the framework of the Decade have been rarely available, and the information sent to the Office of the High Commissioner has referred mainly to their ongoing activities;

(d) Although entrusted with the worldwide coordination of the Plan of Action for the Decade, the Office of the High Commissioner, was not assigned additional financial resources in that regard. To carry out a minimum set of activities, the Office relies on unearmarked voluntary funds; activities for the Decade

compete for resources with the other priorities of the Office;

(e) The potential role of United Nations human rights treaty bodies in monitoring the obligations of States in regard to human rights education has not yet been fully exploited;

(f) The review indicates that international organizations, both governmental and non-governmental, have not fully appreciated and utilized the potential for mobilization offered by the Decade.

V. Recommendations

129. The following main findings of the mid-term global evaluation provide the basis for the following recommendations:

(a) **Obligations of States.** States Members of the United Nations have unanimously proclaimed the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, thereby making commitments relating to human rights education, as set out in General Assembly resolution 49/184. Prior to the Decade, Member States had ratified human rights treaties which contained provisions on human rights education, thereby setting themselves treaty obligations with regard to education in general and human rights education in particular. The evaluation, however, reveals that effective national strategies for human rights education have very rarely been developed;

(b) **United Nations system.** The United Nations system has yet to adopt a system-wide response to the Decade, even though the United Nations reforms currently under way call for a system-wide mainstreaming of human rights in all United Nations activities, from needs and country assessment to priority-setting, programming, monitoring and evaluation;

(c) **National and local actors.** National and local actors have contributed greatly towards the achievement of the goals and objectives of the Decade. As indicated above, the Decade has been a catalyst in eliciting a response from Governments but the response has been uneven and clearly much more needs to be done. Both the United Nations and its Member States have repeatedly recognized the invaluable contribution of non-governmental organizations to human rights education. The present review reconfirms that non-governmental organizations are key actors in that field, and that the Decade is slowly but increasingly proving to be a catalyst and an umbrella for their efforts. There is a growing need, however, for increased collaboration and coordination between governmental and non-governmental actors in respect of their human rights education activities;

(d) **Regional cooperation**. The importance of regional and subregional approaches is clearly reflected in the work of non-governmental actors at those levels. The present review, however, indicates that while there are well-established intergovernmental regional structures, both within and outside the United Nations, the potential of such structures to contribute to the realization of the goals of the Decade remains largely unfulfilled;

(e) **Monitoring, implementation and evaluation**. Despite the considerable efforts of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, it is clear from the experience of the first five years of the Decade that monitoring and evaluation of the Decade need to be strengthened at all levels (international, regional, subregional, national and local) and by all actors (intergovernmental, governmental and non-governmental alike);

(f) **Resources**. An enormous gap remains between the commitments and obligations made in connection with the Decade, the expectations raised, and the resources actually committed at every level. This gap must be filled as a matter of urgency, if the remaining years of the Decade are to leave a strong foundation of achievement for subsequent work which will truly meet the needs of all for human rights education. Sustainability of activities beyond the Decade is a crucial issue since, as the Decade itself clearly demonstrates, human rights education is indeed a lifelong process.

A. Overall recommendations

130. Set out below are overall recommendations directed at all principal actors and for implementation at all levels.

Human rights education: concepts and methods

131. Value-oriented human rights education alone is insufficient. Human rights education should make reference to human rights instruments and mechanisms

of protection, and to procedures for ensuring accountability.

132. Creative participatory teaching methods that are relevant to peoples' lives should be used, and human rights should be introduced as a holistic framework.

133. Gender sensitivity should be emphasized in all educational activities.

134. An enabling environment for human rights educators (including the provision of information, training, facilities, equipment and protection from harassment) should be ensured.

135. Priority should be given to sustainable approaches (i.e., training of trainers, integration of human rights into all relevant training and educational curricula etc.).

Content of human rights education

136. Activities for human rights education should address the following issues:

(a) Economic, social and cultural rights;

(b) Good governance;

(c) Impunity, and international criminal tribunals to deal with crimes against humanity;

(d) Human rights defenders (and the related United Nations declaration), racism and discrimination.

137. The link between development and human rights should be stressed.

138. The universality and indivisibility of human rights should be emphasized.

Programmes on human rights education

139. Sufficient attention should be paid to ensure that the human rights education needs of children and young people, as well as of adults, are met.

140. Interaction among children and youth belonging to different ethnic communities should be promoted. Human rights education should be fostered within and outside school curricula.

141. Human rights education should be promoted in all educational initiatives aimed at adults.

142. Human rights education efforts aimed at the following targets should be increased:

(a) Local government officials, community leaders (both secular and religious);

(b) Legal and paralegal service providers;

(c) Rural populations and illiterate people;

(d) Women and girls;

(e) Vulnerable groups, such as people with HIV/AIDS, people with disabilities, minorities and the elderly;

(f) Non-state actors, such as multinational corporations, trade and financial organizations (World Trade Organization, World Bank, International Monetary Fund etc.).

143. The utilization of the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education for mobilization and the establishment of partnerships should be increased.

Evaluation, research and monitoring

144. Evaluation and studies and research of long-term impact should be undertaken in order to better understand which approaches work best and why, and in order to elaborate evaluation criteria. Every project on human rights education should incorporate the development of indicators to evaluate qualitative impact.

Mass media and freedom of information

145. Mass media strategies that would effectively promote human rights should be developed. Such strategies might include the following elements:

(a) Media focus on human rights monitoring;

(b) Increasing the use of the media by non-governmental organizations;

(c) Training of media professionals on mechanisms for human rights protection;

(d) Involvement of the community of artists;

(e) Use by the media, when appropriate, of techniques of social marketing.

146. Law reform, policies and practices that improve access to information and strengthen mechanisms that facilitate the flow of information and freedom of the press and other media should be promoted and implemented more vigourously. Human rights

education should focus on such law reform policies and practices.

147. The possibilities offered by new information technologies in furthering human rights education should be better exploited, and access to such technologies should be increased. Existing programmes supporting the online development of projects on human rights education should be strengthened and new programmes implemented.

Resources

148. Good practices for human rights education should be identified, compiled and disseminated.

149. Organizational capacity-building in human rights education should be fostered.

150. Funding for human rights education should be increased.

151. Research on issues related to human rights education should be enhanced in academic institutions and human rights institutes.

152. When appropriate, alliances with the business sector should be developed in support of human rights education.

B. National level

153. Governments should reaffirm the commitments and obligations that they have already made in respect of human rights education and accelerate their pace of implementation so as to realize significant achievements by the end of the Decade.

154. Governments should promote the development of national strategies for human rights education which are comprehensive (in terms of outreach), participatory (in terms of involvement of all relevant actors), effective (in terms of educational methodologies) and sustainable (over the long term). Such strategies could be embodied in a national plan of action for human rights education (the relevant United Nations guidelines provide guidance in this regard).

155. Human rights education should be included as a component of national development plans and of other relevant national plans of action (general plans of action on human rights or those relating to women, children, minorities, indigenous peoples etc.).

156. All governmental and non-governmental actors should recognize, in a spirit of mutual respect, each other's potential and capacities in furthering human rights education. Partnerships should be established where cooperation (rather than co-option) is furthered. Maximum use should be made of existing programmes, materials and resources.

157. Systems for better coordination of effort and greater cooperation among the various governmental agencies should be developed.

158. Non-governmental organizations should develop and implement strategies to encourage Governments to fulfil their obligations to integrate human rights education into all forms and levels of education for children, youth and adults, and should monitor those strategies.

159. International resources and materials should be adapted to local linguistic and cultural contexts.

C. Regional level

160. Key regional human rights education organizations, institutions, agencies and networks should be supported (or, if necessary, established) to develop further the human rights education capacity within regions, including support for regional meetings, training of trainers, online networking, sharing of region-specific materials etc.

161. Region-specific programmes or coordination systems to maximize the participation of national entities (whether governmental or non-governmental) in programmes on human rights education should be developed. Such region-specific programmes can be linked to existing regional programmes supported by the United Nations.

162. Strategies should be developed for the wider distribution of materials on human rights education through regional networks.

163. Links should be established with regional mass media, social development and other groups to encourage the inclusion of human rights in their training programmes.

164. Existing regional intergovernmental organizations should be encouraged to integrate human rights education into their programmes and to allocate

additional resources in that regard within the framework of the Decade.

165. Work with regional, education-related intergovernmental organizations should be enhanced in order to promote human rights education.

D. International level

166. United Nations institutions should adopt a system-wide approach to the Decade. An effective coordination system should be developed and the role of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in such a system should be strengthened.

167. Effective human rights training should be undertaken for all United Nations staff.

168. Human rights education should be included in the agenda of the special session of the General Assembly on the follow-up to the World Summit for Children, 2001.

169. The Office of the High Commissioner, as requested by the General Assembly, should monitor the developments in human rights education that take place during the Decade. In this regard, Governments should provide adequate means to enable the Office to fulfil that role.

170. UNESCO, through its network of national commissions, should play an active part in encouraging Governments to develop human rights curricula for formal education and to take steps to ensure that school environments are conducive to human rights education.

171. United Nations treaty bodies should emphasize the obligations of States parties with regard to human rights education by actively seeking detailed information during their review of the reports of State parties. Inadequacies in addressing priority target audiences should consistently be identified by treaty bodies as an area of concern. In addition, treaty bodies should perform a clearing-house role by sharing with Governments approaches and strategies that have proven successful elsewhere, and should keep the Office of the High Commissioner informed of major national developments in human rights education.

172. The capacity for human rights education of national presences of intergovernmental organizations (United Nations resident coordinators, field presences of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, United Nations information centres, national and local offices of United Nations agencies etc.) should be strengthened so that they can provide technical support to national and local activities for human rights education.

173. Intergovernmental organizations should facilitate collaboration between governmental institutions and non-governmental organizations at the national level.

174. Educational materials developed by international organizations should be made easily accessible, distributed free of charge and translated into local languages.

175. The potential support and contribution to human rights education by non-state actors, including the business community, as well as development, trade and financial organizations, should be explored.

VI. Conclusions

176. The right to human rights education has been reaffirmed in several international and regional human rights instruments. Adequate resources should be allocated by the responsible parties for the realization of the right to human rights education.

177. Human rights education is also an important strategy for achieving several important ends, notably empowerment, participation, transparency, accountability, the prevention of conflict, conflict resolution, peacemaking and peace-building, and the more effective protection and realization of all human rights for all.

178. The Decade remains the sole mechanism for global mobilization of strategies for human rights education; that potential must be more effectively utilized in the remaining years of the Decade, thus laying the foundations for sustainability beyond the Decade.

Notes

[1] The questionnaires have also been disseminated through the web site of the High Commissioner (see <*http://www.unhcr.ch/html/menu6/1/edudec.htm*>).

[2] Messages were received from 2 governmental officials, 5 national institutions, 22 national non-governmental organizations, 9 human rights institutes and university departments or faculties, and 5 other partners. Messages

were also received from 2 intergovernmental organizations and 5 non-governmental organizations. A total of 50 replies.

[3] Such accounts are available, in a summary form, in the relevant reports of the High Commissioner and of the Secretary-General, submitted periodically to the General Assembly and to the Commission on Human Rights.

[4] Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), chap. III), sect. II.D, para. 78.

[5] Ibid., para. 81.

[6] Ibid., para. 82.

[7] The resolution of the Assembly and other basic documents concerning the Decade are contained in basic information kit No. 4, "Human rights education: lesson for life", published by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

[8] See A/51/506/Add.1, appendix, sect. IV.

[9] Vienna Declaration ..., sect. II.A, para. 1.

[10] Detailed information about the activities of the Office within the framework of the Decade is provided in "United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004): briefing note for permanent missions, 28 July 2000", available on the web site of the Office (*<http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu6/1/edudec.htm>*).

[11] The address is *<http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu6/1/edudec.htm>*.

[12] The address is *<http://www.unhchr.ch/udhr/index.htm>*.

[13] Since December 1998, free access to these publications and other related information is available online at *<http://www.unesco.org/human_rights/index.html>*.

[14] Separate mention of the human rights treaty bodies is needed. Responding to an inquiry from the High Commissioner in 1995, the United Nations human rights treaty bodies expressed interest in offering to States concrete suggestions on the implementation of the obligations assumed by them in connection with human rights education and awareness-raising. The treaty bodies, especially the Committee on Economic and Social Rights, have an important role to play in monitoring the implementation of recommendations relating to human rights education. In support of their efforts, the Office of the High Commissioner prepared a study on human rights education and human rights treaties.

[15] Lee Swepston and the International Labour Office, Geneva, 1998.

[16] World Bank, Washington, D.C., 1998.

Annex

United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004): responses received to questionnaires as at 31 July 2000, by region and institution

Institution	*International*	*Africa*	*Americas*	*Asia*	*Europe*	*Total*
Governments	-	7	7	4	17	35
Intergovernmental organizations	15	-	1	-	-	16
National institutions	-	3	8	3	9	23
Non-governmental organizations	41	13	21	14	23	112
Institutes and universities	-	4	7	2	13	26
National commissions for UNESCO	-	-	1	-	3	4
Other	1	-	-	1	-	2
Total	**57**	**27**	**45**	**24**	**65**	**218**